Writer
七月鏡一
Kyoichi Nanatsuki

Artist
梟
Night Owl

武器商人
The Arms Peddler

The future fallen into ruin is the time.
The wilderness of the death is the place
Beautiful Arms Peddler asks the boy who lost his family,
"To this sword, what price do you pay?"
It was a start of the perilous journey

6

牙の旅商人

The Arms Peddler

6

原作：七月鏡一
Kyoichi Nanatsuki
作画：梟
Night Owl

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Stigma42:死の国境Ⅲ ——— 025
Stigma43:死の国境Ⅳ ——— 043
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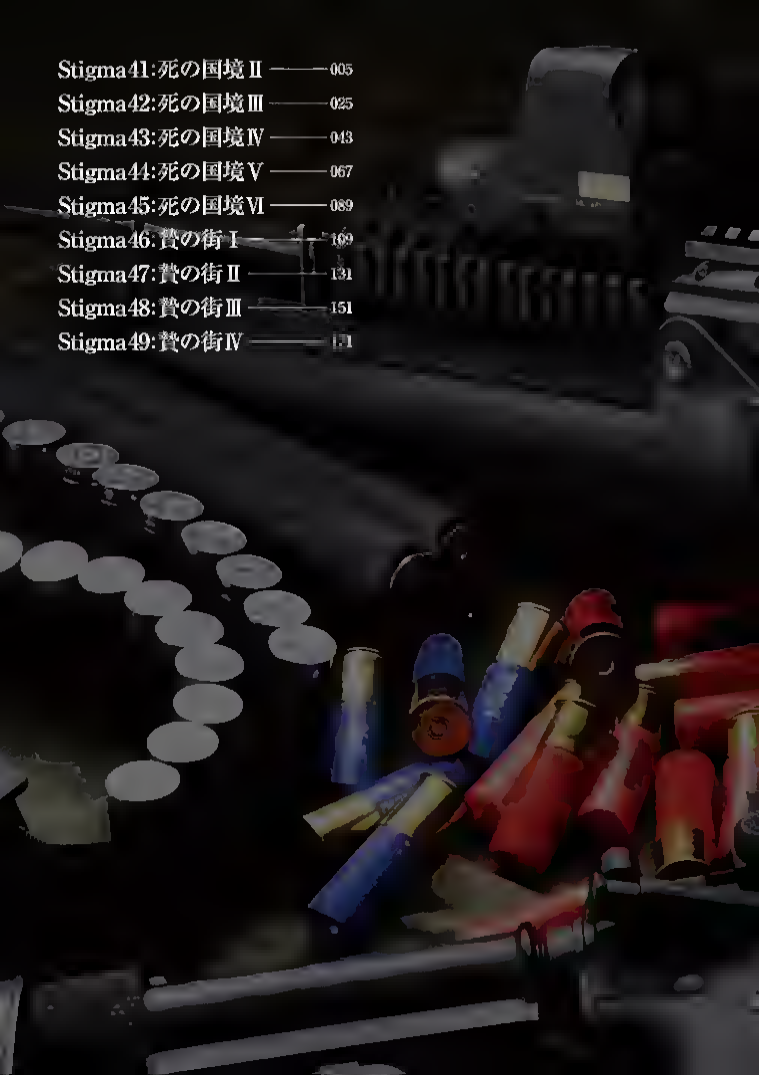

DO YOU KNOW WHY, KID?
WHENEVER I ATTACK A VILLAGE OR CARAVAN, I ALWAYS LEAVE ONE PERSON ALIVE..
IT'S SO THEY CAN SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT ME..
RAAAGH!!

Vol.1
武の旅商人
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UGH...!!
SOU-NA!!
THE HELL ARE YOU?!

BOSS, WHO'S THAT?!
WHAT'S UP WITH THE KID?!
NO CLUE... HE JUST CAME CHARGING AT ME RIGHT OUTTA NOWHERE

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
HAVE I SEEN YOU SOME-WHERE?
HOLD ON, AREN'T YOU...
IT'S YOU! YOU...!!
SO THAT'S WHY !
URGH!

HY-
DRA
AAA
!!
YO, KID! GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
DID YOU TREASURE THAT GIFT I GAVE YOU? DOES IT REMIND YOU OF ME EVERY TIME YOU SEE IT?
EVERY TIME YOU EAT OR WASH YOUR FACE WITH THESE TWO H...NDS...
AND YOU SEE THAT MARK, YOU'LL RECALL...
MY FACE... AND MY NAME, TOO...!

GREAT SHOUT!
SOUNA!
ERGH...!

HOLD UP
OI! LOOK OVER THERE!

WHAT A TOUCHING REUNION
SO IT SEEMS FATE DID BRING US BOTH HERE AFTER ALL

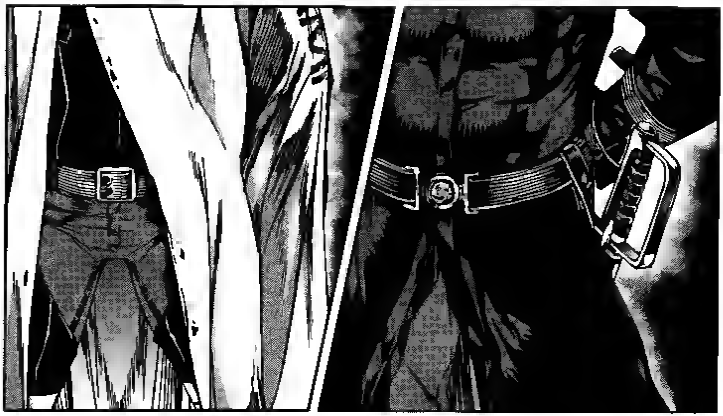
WHAT'S UP, MISSUS?
HM?
I WON'T LET YOU HURT HIM! STAY BACK...!
YES, I KNOW HE MADE THE FIRST MOVE!
HE WAS THE ONE WHO STARTED IT THOUGH WASN'T HE MISSUS?
OR DO YOU WANNA SETTLE THIS LITTLE INCIDENT HERE INSTEAD?
BUT HE DEFINITELY HAD HIS REASONS FOR DOING SO!

I* BELIEVE HE MUST HAVE HAD PROPER REASONS FOR DOING SUCH A THING!
"I" IS SAID AS THIS "SLAVE" INDICATING THAT SHE IS A MEMBER OF ROYALTY
HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HA!!
"I"...?

GIVE... MY SWORD BACK...!
IS THIS YOURS? IT'S PRETTY NEAT
GRAB...
SURE THING...
HERE YOU GO!

IT'S GARAMI, THE ARMS PEDDLER!
ジャキ
THE HELL? WHO'S THIS...?
BOSS! I KNOW HER...!
YOU'VE GOT GOOD SKILLS AND GOOD WARES TO BOOT...
SO YOU'RE GARAMI.. YOU'RE A FAMOUS ONE AREN'T YOU
AND YOU LOOK PRETTY DAMN FINE, TOO...

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE STUFF YOU'RE SELLING
WHAT A SHAME, MY GUILD LICENSE JUST GOT REVOKED, SO I GOT NOTHING FOR YOU

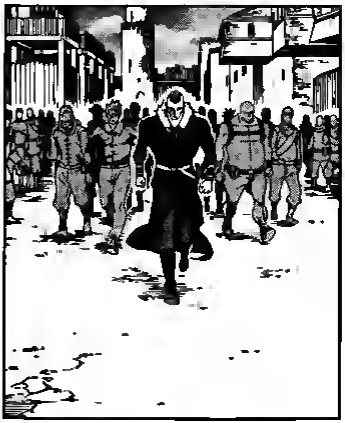


OI! THE CITY GUARD'S HERE!
PITY, THEN...
SOUNA, IS IT...?
I'LL REMEMBER YOU AS ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO'VE TRIED TO SLICE ME A NEW ONE!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, KID?
SOUNA YUKI...

HAHA-HAHA!
IT'S JUST I DUNNO HOW LONG I'LL REMEMBER THAT FOR!

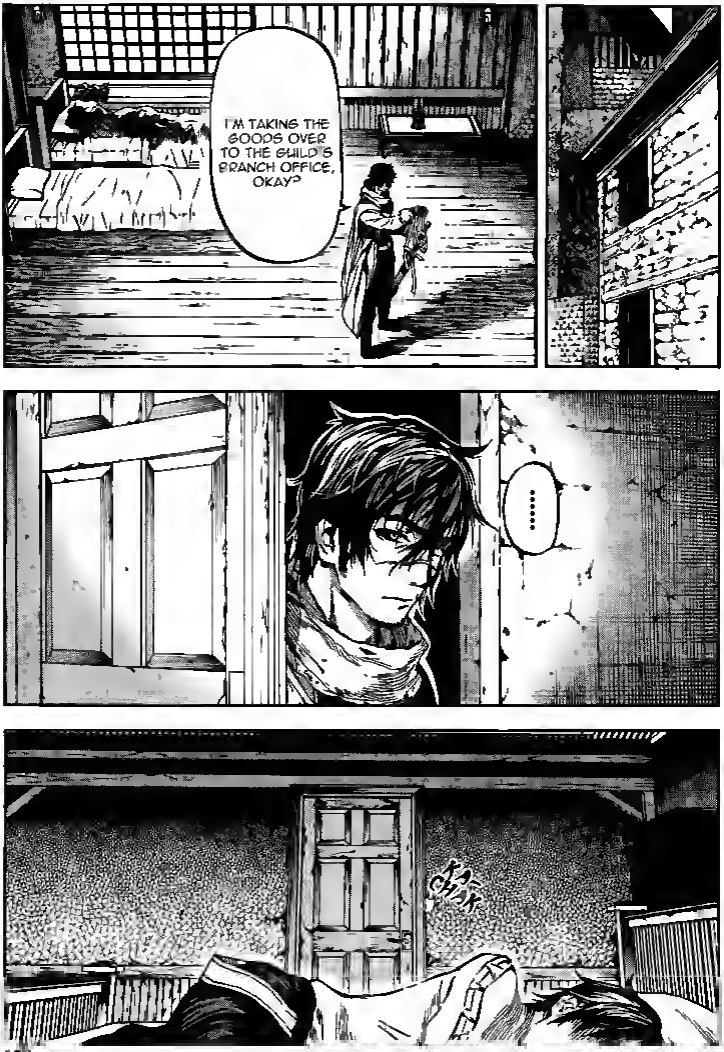
THAT BASTARD'S PROBABLY...

HEY, GET SOME MEN TO KEEP AN EYE ON THEM
WHY, BOSS?



HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
THE KIDNAPPED PRINCESS OF KALADIA HASN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE SHE ESCAPED FROM YUGA...
THE NEXT TIME I SEE YOU WILL BE WHEN YOU DIE...
I'D MADE MY MIND UP AND TAKEN A VOW
……
USING THIS SWORD BUT
SOU-NA.
TO KILL THE MAN WHO MURDERED MY MOM DAD, AND YOUNGER SISTER...

TRANSLATION BY: VISCOUNTRANSLATIONS


I'M TAKING THE GOODS OVER TO THE GUILD'S BRANCH OFFICE, OKAY?
……
ガラガラ

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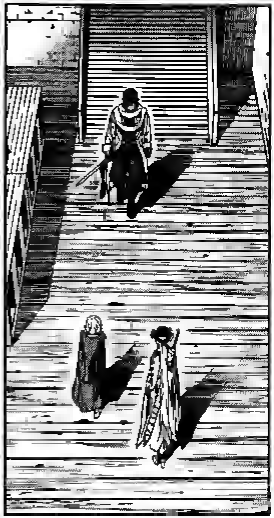
WHERE'S SOUNA?

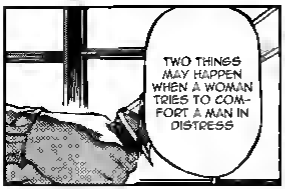


WE SHOULD LET HIM HAVE A LITTLE ALONE TIME

FOR THAT KID TO PICK A FIGHT WITH HYDRA WAS AN UTTER LACK OF SELF-ASSESSMENT ON HIS PART..

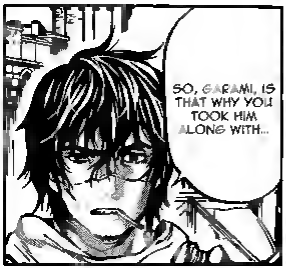
WHO WAS THAT MAN?
HE'S THE LEADER OF AN INFAMOUS GANG OF BANDITS...
THEY USE THE MOST DESPICABLE METHODS TO MAKE THEMSELVES FAMOUS
I HEAR THEY WERE RECENTLY HIRED AS MERCENARIES BY SOME NOBLEMAN OR MERCHANT SOMEWHERE
WHAT "DESPICABLE METHODS"?
AFTER RAIDING A CARAVAN, THEY KILL EVERYONE PRESENT APART FROM ONE PERSON.
THEN THEY LEAVE THEIR "MARK" BRANDED ON THAT ONE PERSON'S BODY...
!!
.....

I'M THE SAME!! I HAVE TO SURVIVE IN ORDER TO TAKE REVENGE AGAINST THE MAN WHO KILLED MY PARENTS!!
I SEE. SO THAT'S WHY.
THERE'S A REASON YOU HAVE TO LIVE ON NO MATTER ONE, ISN'T THERE?!


TWO THINGS MAY HAPPEN WHEN A WOMAN TRIES TO COMFORT A MAN IN DISTRESS

LEAVE IT BE, PRINCESS
I THINK I'LL GO BACK AFTER ALL

BUT THE OTHER IS THAT HE MIGHT SINK INTO AN EVEN GREATER DEPRESSION
ONE IS THAT HE MIGHT FINDING HIS DETERMINATION AGAIN


SO, GARAMI, IS THAT WHY YOU TOOK HIM ALONG WITH...

WHEN I PICKED HIM UP IN THE WILDERNESS, THE FIRST THING HE SAID WAS "I'LL KILL HIM"

IT WAS JUST A TRANSACTION. THAT'S ALL...

ぐぬぬ

HERE'S THE PLACE...

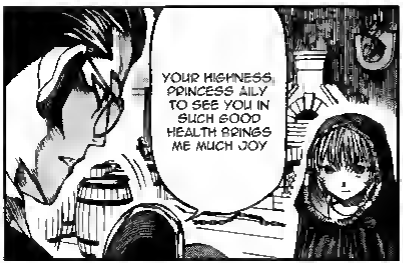
LONG TIME NO SEE

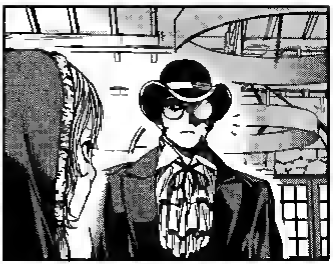
MANUEL
YOU GUYS_!
ACTU-ALLY UM.
WE DIDN'T MEAN TO INTRUDE
I JUST WANTED TO TAKE A LOOK AT HOW THINGS WERE GOING HERE
NO, WHAT I MEANT WAS_

I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU
JUST WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN THESE TWO MONTHS SINCE YOU DEPARTED FROM RUINS GROUP 16?
OH MY SO YOU FINALLY CAME..
SLIP

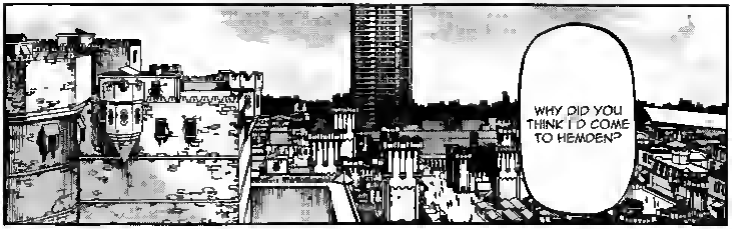
TCH..!
NOW HERE'S SOMEONE I WOULDN'T MIND NOT SEEING..!
NIKOLA..!

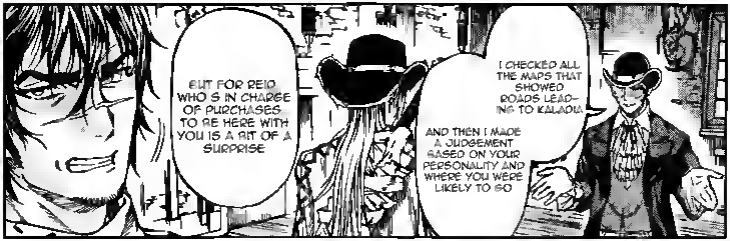
I HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN ANYWHERE - JUST TOOK SOME TIME OFF AT A VACATION SPOT SOMEWHERE IS ALL
HOW I ENVY YOU FOR THAT
I'VE BEEN STUCK HERE IN HEMDEN FOR OVER THREE WEEKS JUST FOR THE SAKE OF FINDING YOU ALL


YOUR HIGHNESS, PRINCESS AILY TO SEE YOU IN SUCH GOOD HEALTH BRINGS ME MUCH JOY



THAT KID'S BEEN SITTING IN THAT SAME SPOT FROM DAWN TILL DUSK FOR THE PAST THREE WEEKS
I FEEL FOR YOU, MAN


WHY DID YOU THINK I'D COME TO HEMDEN?

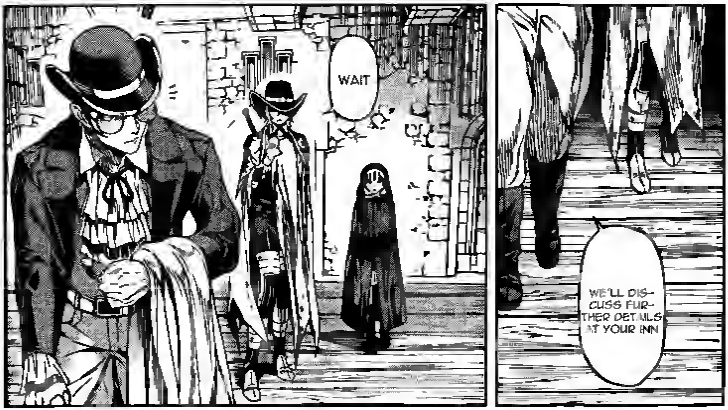

I CHECKED ALL THE MAPS THAT SHOWED ROADS LEADING TO KALADIA
AND THEN I MADE A JUDGEMENT BASED ON YOUR PERSONALITY AND WHERE YOU WERE LIKELY TO GO
BUT FOR REID WHO'S IN CHARGE OF PURCHASES TO BE HERE WITH YOU IS A BIT OF A SURPRISE

SO YOU STILL DON'T KNOW? I GUESS THE RUMORS I HEARD FROM STAYING IN THE VILLAGES FOR A WHILE WERE TRUE AFTER ALL

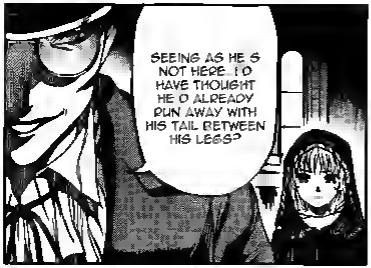
WHAT?

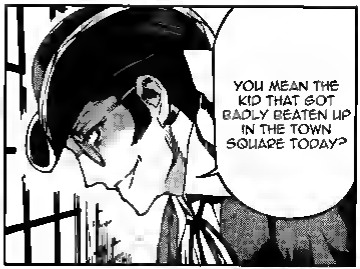
DID YOU WAIT HERE FOR ME BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO COLLECT THE BOUNTY ON MY HEAD?

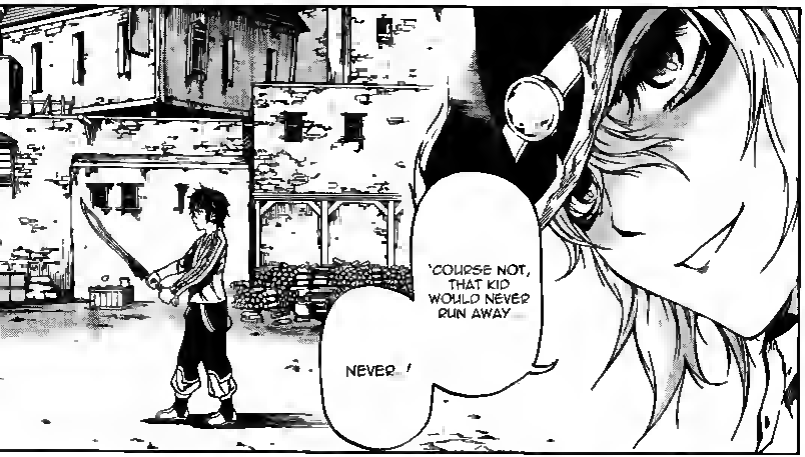
AND I HAVE BEEN SENT HERE TO INFORM YOU THAT THE GUILD COUNCIL HAS HENCE DECIDED TO RESTORE YOUR RIGHT TO TRADE
TEN DAYS AFTER YOU LEFT
BALZAAL LIFTED THE BOUNTY ON YOU
!
HM...
AND THEY HAVE NAMED YOU FOR THE TASK, GARAM!
THE GUILD HAS RECEIVED A MISSION FROM SOMEONE VERY IMPORTANT
WHAT DO THOSE HIGHER-UPS IN THE COUNCIL WANT FROM ME?

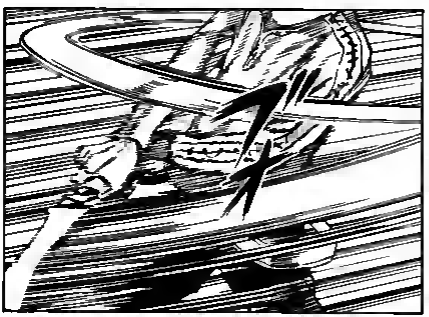

WAIT
WE'LL DISCUSS FURTHER DETAILS AT YOUR INN

SOUNA HAS HIRED ME AS HIS BODYGUARD, AND AS LONG AS THINGS REMAIN UNFINISHED ON HIS END, I CANNOT TAKE ON ANY OTHER REQUESTS
IT'S ALL VERY WELL THAT YOU'VE GIVEN ME MY GUILD TAG BACK, BUT I STILL CAN'T ACCEPT THE MISSION


SEEING AS HE'S NOT HERE, I'D HAVE THOUGHT HE'D ALREADY RUN AWAY WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS?


YOU MEAN THE KID THAT GOT BADLY BEATEN UP IN THE TOWN SQUARE TODAY?


'COURSE NOT, THAT KID WOULD NEVER RUN AWAY
NEVER!



ヒュン!

HA-AH
HA-AH
HAAH HAAH
WHEN I FIRST GOT THIS SWORD, I THOUGHT I COULD JUST KILL HIM AND THAT WOULD BE IT.

BUT AS I AM RIGHT NOW, I STILL CAN'T DEFEAT HIM.!
I WANT...
UH-UH THAT WAY'S NOT GONNA WORK
I WANT TO BECOME STRONGER.!
I HAVE TO BECOME STRONGER.!

WHO'S THERE?!
IT'S NOT LOOKING BAD AT ALL
BUT AT THIS RATE YOU MIGHT NOT WIN EVEN IF YOU PRACTICED FOR A HUNDRED YEARS
YOUR SWORD'S QUITE A NICE ONE
WHY NOT GIVE IT TO ME, SABER?

I SEE YOU'RE QUITE THE HONOR-ABLE ONE
THEN, HOW ABOUT THIS
IF I SAID THAT THE MISSION HAD SOME-THING TO DO WITH THE BOOK KNOWN AS THE "BOOK OF KEYS" THEN WOULD YOU ACCEPT IT?
PEDDLER GARAMI?

!?
WHAT...?
RRRRRUMBLE

VISTRANS.NET

YES, EVERY THING BEGAN IN THE "BLACK FOREST"...
AND "I" HAVE ALSO BEGUN TO REALIZE...
THAT THE "BOOK OF KEYS", THAT BLACK BOOK, HAS STILL NOT RELEASED US FROM ITS GRASP...

AND ALSO WHAT HAPPENED WHEN "I" LOST "HER"...
SOUNA YUKI, DATED THE 613RD YEAR OF THE AGE OF COLLAPSE
AND "WE", POWERLESS TO RESIST, ARE DRAGGED INTO THE CENTER OF THE WHIRLPOOL
THAT IT IS BRINGING THIS WORLD INTO DARKNESS...
原作:七月鏡一 Kyoichi Nanatsuki
作画:梟 Nishi Owl
武の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

HE WAS A BALZAAN YOUTH AROUND TWO YEARS MY SENIOR
WHAT DID YOU SAY...?
STOP
OOF
YOU KID-DING ME?!
HOW COULD I JUST GIVE THIS TO ANYONE?!
LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY THEN
THAT SWORD IS BEING WASTED IN YOUR HANDS YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE IT TO ME
LIFT

EAT THIS!
WAH?!
OHHO
IT'S A BIT OLD, BUT IT'S A GOOD SWORD
G-GIVE IT BACK!
AHH
CATCH!
SIMPLY TOO MANY OPENINGS
BAS-TARD!
STEP
JUST LIKE I DID
TAKE IT FROM ME IF YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES

DAM-
MIT!

RUMBLE

RRRRR
RUMBLE
TH THAT JUST NOW WAS...
IT STOPPED?

NIKOLA... YOU SAID IT WAS A REQUEST RELATED TO THE "BOOK OF KEYS"?
I... I DID INDEED SAY THAT...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF REQUEST IT IS, BUT I'M SURE OF ONE THING...
ONE OF THAT BOOK'S VOLUMES
IS RIGHT HERE IN HEMDEN...!
SARAH! WHY'RE YOU STILL...!

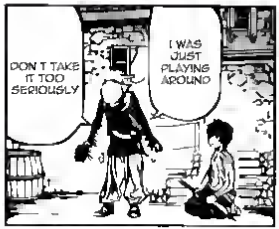
YOU JERK!
WHAT'S WRONG, WHAT'S WRONG?
UGH

SIGH... I'M GUESSIN' YOUR MIND JUST WENT COMPLETELY BLANK
AFTER THAT FIRST MOVE YOU MADE, HUH?
WHEN USING A SWORD, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS FLUENCY BETWEEN EACH MOVE
AN ATTACK MUST FOLLOW STRAIGHT AFTER A BLOCK...
YOU SHUT YOUR FACE!

AND YOUR NEXT ATTACKS SHOULD COME RIGHT AFTER THAT!
MAN CARRYING ON LIKE THIS JUST WON'T WORK FOR YOU
ガシャーン
ヨロ
ヨロ

OH, RIGHT
I CAN DO THAT, BUT ON ONE CONDITION
GIVE ME MY SWORD BACK!
CLACK
CLACK
HOW ABOUT YOU INTRODUCE HER TO ME
THE GIRL WITH YOU WHO LOOKED LIKE A NORTH-ERNER WAS PRETTY CUTE
CRASH
IN YOUR DREAMS ...!
IF THAT HAP-PENS, MAYBE I COULD EVEN MAKE HER MY CONCUBINE...
PH-EW ..

GIVE UP YET? NOW GIVE MY SWORD BACK!
AHAHAHAHA!! I GIVE, I GIVE!!
HUH?
S... SOUNA!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?


I WAS JUST PLAYING AROUND
DON'T TAKE IT TOO SERIOUSLY

HERE, SOUNA, IT'S ALL YOURS

P... "PLAY-ING"?!

I'M NOT A SOL-DIER OR ANY-THING. WHAT ELSE COULD I HAVE DONE
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, SARE?

EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE NO GOOD WITH SWORDS AT ALL
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN SOMEONE COME CHARGING AT ME AFTER I PULL A PRANK ON THEM

ゴポ…

I'M NOT A SOLDIER EITHER
ALL BALZANS EVEN THE SONS OF MERCHANTS ARE GOOD AT SWORD-FIGHTING
バン
バン

HM?
WAIT A SEC

THERE'S A SMELL...

WAIT ...!
AND IT'S NOT JUST ONE OR TWO PEOPLE'S...!
IT'S BLOOD...!

WOAH...!

SIX MEN. A WHOLE SQUAD OF THEM..
BALZAAN SOLDIERS
H-HOW DID THEY..?
QUESTION IS, WHERE DID THE CHOPPED HEADS GO..
ALL OF THEM HAD THEIR HEADS CHOPPED OFF...
HUH?
DRIP

HE WAS THERE...

WHERE IS... THE "BOOK"?
THE ARMS PEDDLER 45
TO BE CONTINUED
TRANSLATION BY
VISCOUNTRANSLATIONS

VISTRANS.NET

WHERE IS THE "BOOK"...?
ANSWER ME...
THAT THING SIMPLY APPEARED THERE ALL OF A SUDDEN...
SO YOU DON'T KNOW ....

牙の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

EH...?
COULD IT MEAN THE "BOOK OF KEYS"?!
BY THE "BOOK"...
THERE IT IS...!!
IT'S THAT BUG OVER THERE!!

FORM INTO TWO ROWS AND FIRE!!
BALZAAN SOLDIERS?

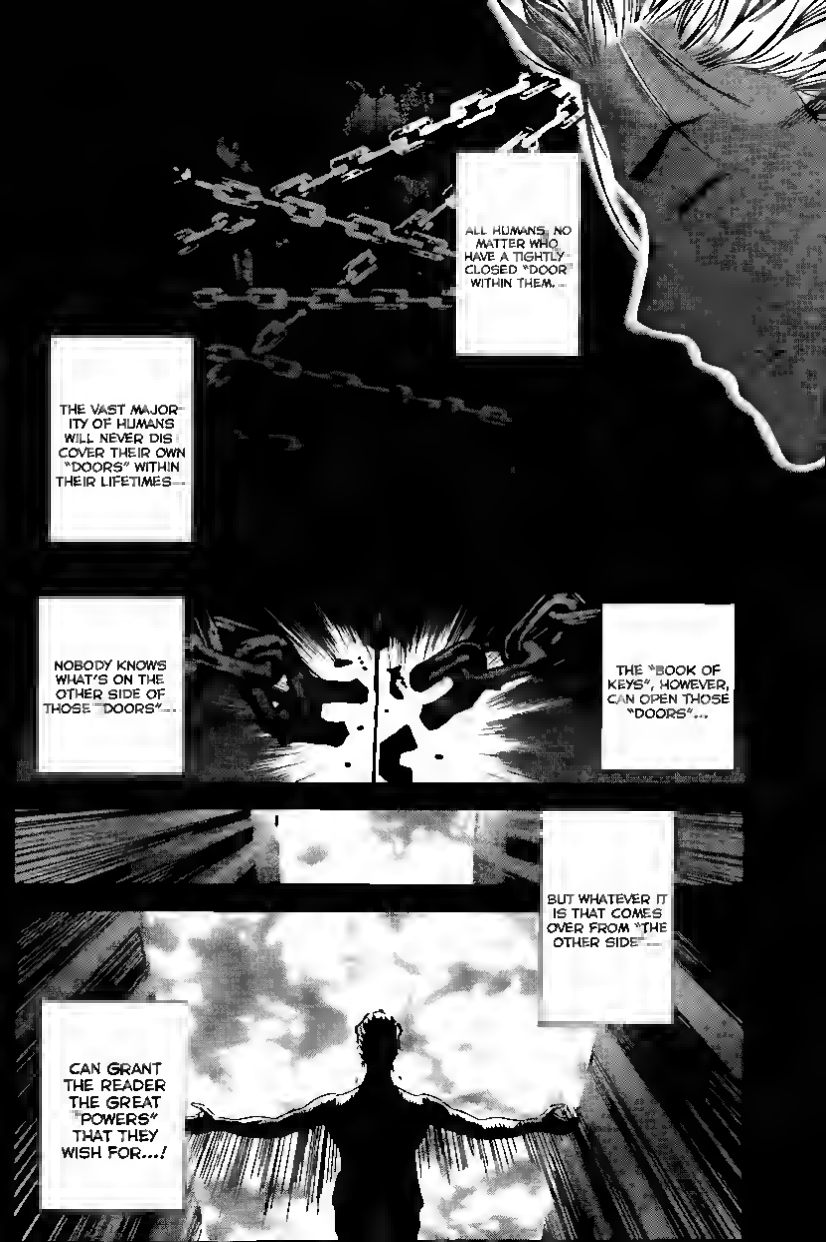
READY!
LET'S SAIL!
EH? WAIT...
FIRE!!
SCREEE EEEECH

THAT DAMNED MONSTER...!
WE GOT IT GOOD!
A BULLET...?
HM?
DROP
THIS BASTARD'S KILLED GOD KNOWS HOW MANY PEOPLE ALREADY...

YOU FOOLS...!
DAMN THIS THING! THE BULLETS...
AAA-RGH!!

WH... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
YOU ASKING ME...? ISN'T IT BLOODY OBVIOUS?
WE RUN OF COURSE!
GREAT IDEA!
YOU BET I DO!
NEED TO SCREAM?
GO FOR IT!
LOUDER THEN!
WAAAAARGH!!!

WH-WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT...!
SOMEONE WHO'D READ THE "BOOK OF KEYS"—
THE "BOOK OF KEYS"
JUST SOMETHING I READ ABOUT IN AN ANCIENT TEXT


ALL HUMANS, NO MATTER WHO, HAVE A TIGHTLY CLOSED "DOOR" WITHIN THEM...
THE VAST MAJORITY OF HUMANS WILL NEVER DISCOVER THEIR OWN "DOORS" WITHIN THEIR LIFETIMES...
NOBODY KNOWS WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THOSE "DOORS"...
THE "BOOK OF KEYS", HOWEVER, CAN OPEN THOSE "DOORS"...
BUT WHATEVER IT IS THAT COMES OVER FROM "THE OTHER SIDE"...
CAN GRANT THE READER THE GREAT "POWERS" THAT THEY WISH FOR...!

HISTORY HAS RECORDED SEVERAL INSTANCES WHERE THE "BOOK OF KEYS" HAS APPEARED...!
AND ANYONE WHO HAS READ IT HAS OBTAINED GREAT "POWER"...!
SOME HAVE REBUILT COUNTRIES
WHILE OTHERS HAVE RAZED THEM TO THE GROUND...!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR THE "BOOK OF KEYS" FOR SEVERAL YEARS ALREADY!
AND TONIGHT I FINALLY DISCOVERED WHERE IT WENT!

YOU ABSOLUTELY CANNOT READ THAT THING!
EVEN IF YOU GET THAT KIND OF "POWER", YOU WON'T BE HAPPY AT ALL, SABER!
YOU CAN'T!
I HAVE...!
I'VE SEEN THE "BOOK OF KEYS", AND I'VE SEEN THE PEOPLE WHO'VE READ IT, TOO!
WHAT?!
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE ALREADY SEEN THE "BOOK OF KEYS", DOESN'T IT...
AND NO MATTER WHO IT IS, THEY END UP DEAD...!
NO MATTER WHO IT IS, THEY END UP UNHAPPY...!

IT'S JUST FOR THE MONEY
HUHP
IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS YOU THINK IT IS!
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, GETTING THAT KIND OF "POWER" IS !
MY FAMILY'S A BIG MERCHANT FAMILY WE'VE GOT EIGHT BOYS IN TOTAL
OKAY, LISTEN UP
WHO SAID I WANTED TO READ IT MYSELF...?
IF I CAN SELL THE "BOOK", THEN I'LL EARN SOME MONEY
I'M JUST IN FOR THE MONEY, THAT'S ALL!
D'YOU THINK THAT I, WHO'S RANKED DEAD LAST IN THE FAMILY LINE WOULD BE ABLE TO BECOME THE HEAD OF IT?
THAT'S WHY I NEED TO STRIKE OUT ON MY OWN USING THAT BIT OF MONEY!
WHICH IS WHY I WANT THE "BOOK OF KEYS"!
I-I SEE

THEY ONLY NEED ONE PRINCE TO INHERIT THE THRONE
SO IT'S BECOME CUSTOMARY TO JUST EXECUTE THE REMAINING BROTHERS
AH...
IT'S NOT LIKE THE BALZAAL ROYAL FAMILY
SO IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR MILITARY EXPLOITS THEY START UP WARS..
AND IN ORDER TO COVER THEIR MILITARY EXPENSES, THEY TURN THE PEOPLE THEY DON'T LIKE INTO SLAVES
.....
SABER, DO YOU

I THOUGHT ALL BALZAANS APPROVED OF THE SLAVE TRADE...
BALZAANS COME IN MANY DIFFERENT SHAPES AND SIZES TOO, DON'T THEY?
I HATE SLAVERY AND ALL THAT STUFF...
IF I EVER BECAME THE KING OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, FIRST THING I'D DO WOULD BE TO CLEAR OUT YUGA'S MARKET...!
GUESS I'LL HEAD BACK TO MY INN THEN
YEAH, ME TOO...

GOT IT!
REMEMBER TO COME BACK TO THIS WELL TOMORROW EVENING. I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO USE A SWORD THEN!
OH, RIGHT!
LORD SABER...

WE FEEL VERY BAD RIGHT NOW..
WE HAVE OUR OWN PURPOSE TOO, YOU KNOW
GRAMPS... SO YOU FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH ME...
PLEASE DO NOT FORGET WHERE YOU STAND...
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU RETURNED THE CHAOS FROM JUST NOW WILL MEAN THAT THE GUARD HAS BEEN SENT OUT TO PATROL THE STREETS
WELL. THERE RE TIMES WHEN I JUST WANNA GO OUT AND FEEL THE BREEZE ON MY OWN TOO Y KNOW

HOW COULD I EVER FORGET MY OWN PERSONAL STANDPOINT
I, THE EIGHTH PRINCE OF THE BALZAAL KINGDOM
WILL NEVER RUN FROM MY OWN FATE
TO BE CONTINUED
THE LEGEND OF HEROES 4H
TRANSLATION BY
VISCOUNTRANSLATIONS

LOOKING FOR HELP!

AS THE MORE ATTENTIVE OF YOU MIGHT KNOW, VISTRANS IS A SOLO GROUP. I TRANSLATE AND EDIT ALL BY MYSELF. "CRIES IN LONELINESS"

BUT I CAN'T DO EVERYTHING ALONE.

SO I'M LOOKING FOR TRANSLATORS FOR THE FOLLOWING TWO PROJECTS

AIZAWA-SAN ZOUSHOUKU
(NEW SERIES BY SHIKI SEIICHI, AUTHOR OF FUJIMURA-KUN METSU)

SHIRYAKU! IKA MUSUME

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

VISCOUN

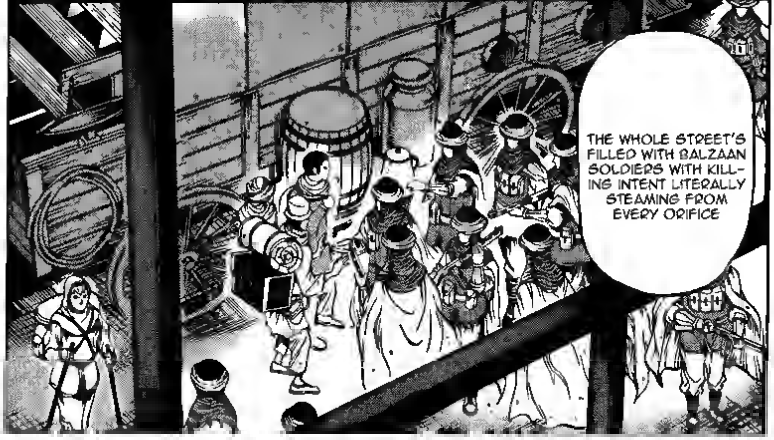
HA-AH...
HA-AH...
WHERE IS... THE "BOOK"?
I HAVE TO TELL GARAM!
ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT...!

ANYONE THERE?!
KNOCK KNOCK
ANYONE ?!
EH?
CLUNK
CLUNK
JUST WAIT THERE
THE INNKEEPERS LOCKED THE DOOR. I'LL OPEN IT FOR YOU
SOUNA?
AILY?
WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?! WE WERE WORRIED SICK CAUSE YOU WEREN'T AT THE INN
S-SORRY... A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENED...
HURRY UP! IT'S SOMETHING URGENT!
THINGS ARE PRETTY BAD ON THIS END TOO, Y'KNOW!

IT'S 'CAUSE THE "BOOK OF KEYS" IS GONNA...
武の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

WHAT'D YOU JUST SAY?!
SOUNA...?
THIS IS MAKING THINGS QUITE DIFFICULT FOR US, LADY PRINCESS.

WHY?!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME WANTING TO GO LOOK FOR SOUNA AS WELL?!
IF WE SET YOU LOOSE ON BALZAAL-CONTROLLED STREETS YOU'LL STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, YOU LOOK LIKE NOBILITY
BUT YES-TERDAY...!
YESTERDAY WAS YESTERDAY, TODAY IS TODAY


THE WHOLE STREET'S FILLED WITH BALZAAN SOLDIERS WITH KILLING INTENT LITERALLY STEAMING FROM EVERY ORIFICE

I HEARD THAT LAST NIGHT, A DOZEN PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN AN INSTANT
THE ATTACK ON THE PATROL SQUAD IS STILL BEING INVESTIGATED

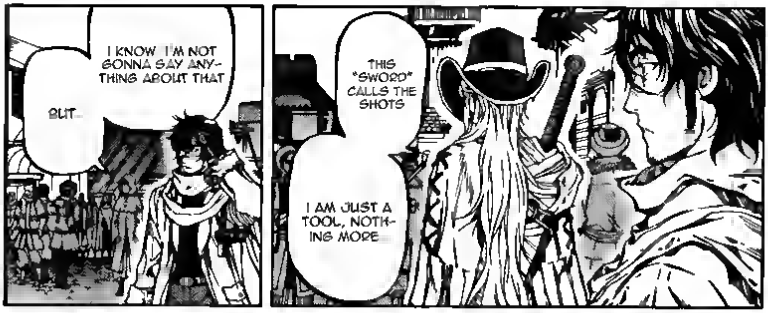
IF ONLY I'D OPENED THE DOOR FASTER AT THE TIME...

I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL... BUT YOU SHOULD JUST LEAVE FINDING THAT KID TO ME AND GARAM!
ガバン

WAIT, SARAMI!
BUT SOUNA DISAPPEARED BECAUSE HE WAS IN SOME WAY LINKED TO THE "BOOK"
I KNOW YOU'RE FOCUSED ON FINDING THE "BOOK OF KEYS"
DO I HAVE TO GIVE YOU AN ANSWER, PRINCESS?
WHICH ONE ARE YOU PLANNING ON LOOKING FOR, SOUNA OR THE "BOOK"?

KA-CHAK

GARAM!
.....


I KNOW. I'M NOT GONNA SAY ANY-THING ABOUT THAT
BUT...
THIS "SWORD" CALLS THE SHOTS
I AM JUST A TOOL, NOTH-ING MORE

I'M REALLY SUR-PRISED THAT YOU PICKED UP THAT KID IN THE WILDERNESS AND TOOK HIM ALONG WITH YOU...
DON'T YOU HAVE A POLICY OF NOT MAKING CONTACT WITH OTHER PEOPLE...?

YOU DIDN'T DO THAT BECAUSE THE "SWORD" TOLD YOU TO, AM I RIGHT?
YOU SHOULD TELL ME SOMETIME WHAT YOU'RE THINKING OF DOING
I'M GONNA GO TAKE A LOOK AT THE WEST SIDE
THERE'RE SOME INFORMATION TRADERS THAT I KNOW THERE

THAT'S ALL THERE IS FOR INFORMATION
LAST NIGHT'S INCIDENT GAVE THE SOLDIERS GARRISONED HERE QUITE A SHOCK, IT SEEMS
THANKS FOR YOUR WORK. WE'LL REGROUP WHEN THERE'S MORE NEWS
BIG BRO...
I MEAN, THE NORTHERN ARMY'S LORD COMMANDER'S FINALLY STARTED TO LOOK A BIT UNEASY
SO SECURITY'S BEEN INCREASED FIVEFOLD

PLEASE USE THIS INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY.. DO NOT LET US DOWN
EVERYONE IS FOLLOWING YOU BECAUSE THEY TRUST YOU, LORD SABER
GOT IT GRAMPS
CRCAK

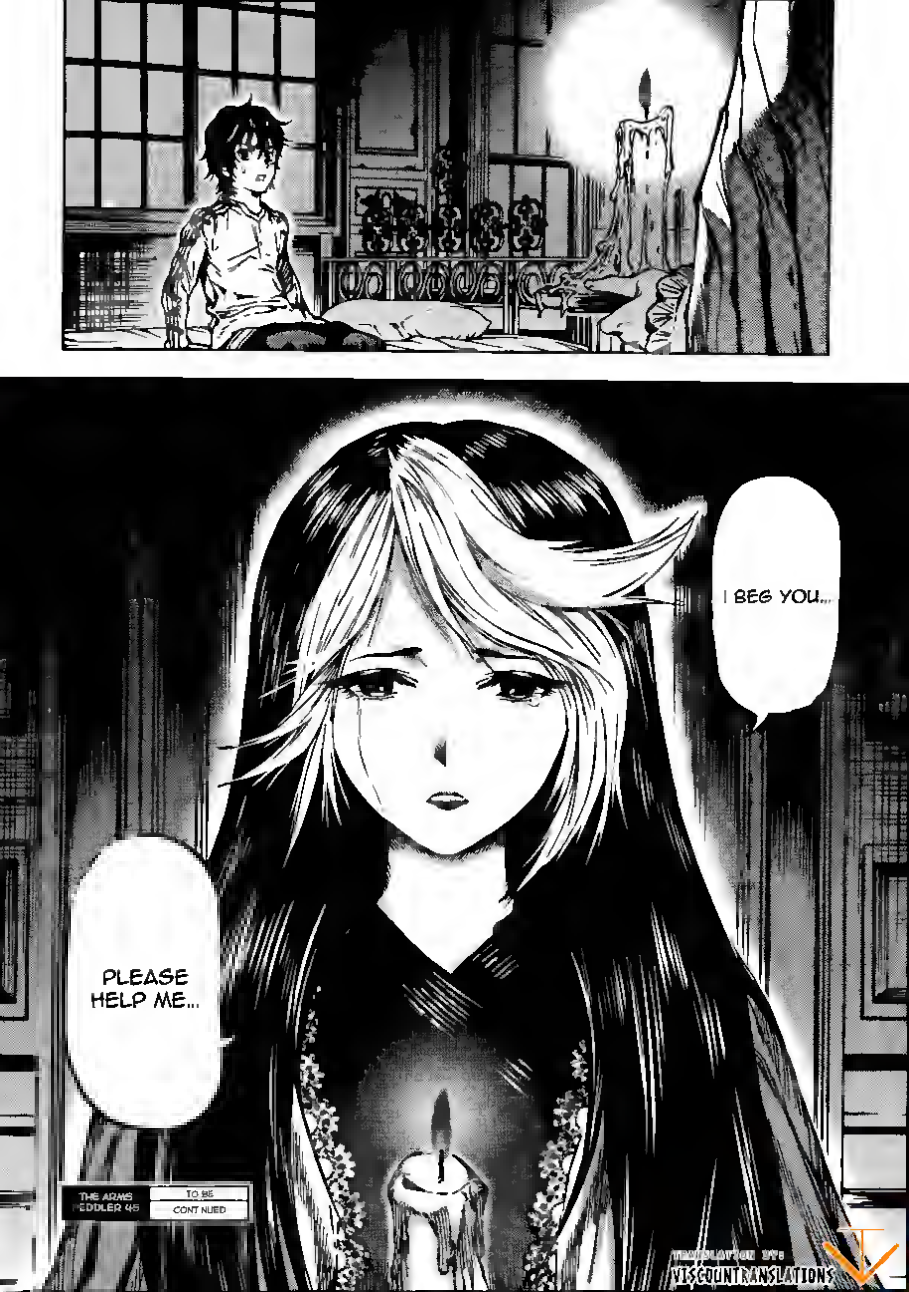
I'M MEETING UP WITH SOMEONE
TONIGHT... AT THE REPORTING PLACE.
ALSO, TWO SPIES FROM THE FRONT LINE RETURNED TODAY
HUH?
AH... TONIGHT WON'T WORK. LEAVE IT TILL LATER
SCREW IT, CAN'T REALLY EXPECT MUCH...
FROM THOSE KINDA PEOPLE ANYWAY
DAMN IT, SOUNA, THAT JERK...
WHY'S HE STILL NOT HERE

SHE'S THE ONE WHO'S WITH SOLINA.
HM?

I'M JUST THE SON OF THE OWNER OF THAT SHOP OVER THERE
I DON'T GET IT. WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHY'RE YOU FOLLOWING ME?
DON'T PLAY DUMB. THAT UNIQUE WAY OF WALKING OF YOURS IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR TO ME...
BALZAAN ASSASSIN!

THAT'S RIGHT.!
SO STRONG..!

HAHH...
WHERE'S THIS...?
I'M PROBABLY IN...
SOMEONE'S ROOM.
WH-WHO'S THERE...?
CREAK


I BEG YOU...
PLEASE HELP ME...
THE ARMS PEDDLER 45
TO BE CONTINUED
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HA-AH
HA-AH
STAND UP, PRINCE SABER YOUR TRAINING HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN...
I DON'T WANNA FIGHT ANY-MORE... AT THIS RATE... I'D MUCH RATHER DIE...
DIE? SURE YOU CAN...

WHEN THAT TIME COMES, WHAT WOULD YOUR MOTHER THINK?
TO HAVE NO CHILDREN AND BECOME A SLAVE FOR THE REST OF ONE'S LIFE MUST BE SUCH A SAD THING..!
FOR A BALZAAN PRINCE, DEATH IS A LIFELONG PARTNER
NO MATTER WHICH PRINCE ASCENDS TO THE THRONE, ALL HIS BROTHERS MUST BE KILLED. THAT IS THE LAW WITHIN THE PALACE.

WITHOUT IT, YOU HAVEN'T A HOPE OF LEARNING ANYTHING!
THAT'S IT! THAT LOOK OF HATE IN YOUR EYES!
DO NOT INSULT... MY MOTHER...!

剣の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

INSTEAD, THEY WILL BE DESPICABLE TOOLS USED TO CATCH PEOPLE IN THE DARK AND CUT THEIR THROATS FROM BEHIND...!
THE SKILLS YOU WILL LEARN WILL BE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE WARRIORS WHO FIGHT FOR GLORY ON THE BATTLEFIELD...!
I, MEYLER, HEAD OF THE "TIGER GUILD", SHALL TEACH YOU
THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE WAY OF THE ASSASSIN...!
FIRSTLY, THIS IS A MUST IF YOU WANT TO STAY ALIVE!
WHEN FACED WITH A PERSON WHO KNOWS YOU ARE AN ASSASSIN, HAVE NO HESITATION AND KILL THEM!

YOU'VE GOT SOME SKILLS HUH, ASSAS-SIN!
SO STRONG...! AND NOT ONLY THAT...
SHE KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT THE WAYS OF THE ASSASSIN...!
DANGER-OUS...!
SHE'S A DANGEROUS ONE...!

HMPH
FINALLY SHOWING YOUR TRUE COLORS, EH
SHE MUST BE ELIMI-NATED!

!

STEP
FWIP

PHEW...

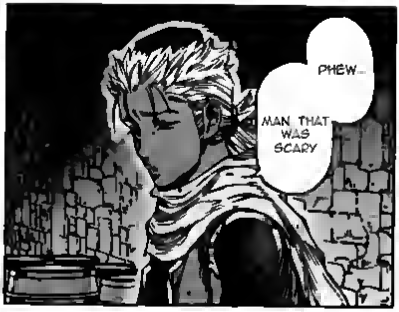
I JUST WANNA FIND SOUNA. THAT'S IT
I DON'T WANNA FIGHT YOU
AREN'T YOU SOUNA'S COMPANION?
HOLD UP!
STEP
STEP
BUT HE NEVER CAME
YEAH, I PROMISED TO TEACH HIM HOW TO USE A SWORD TONIGHT
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOUNA?

SO FROM HEARING THAT, IT SOUNDS LIKE SOUNA'S GONE MISSING?
SO FROM HEARING THAT, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE SOUNA IS?
I'M GUESSING THAT AFTER SEEING THAT THING LAST NIGHT, HE STILL HASN'T RECOVERED FROM THE SHOCK
IT WAS THAT BIG MONSTER HUNTING BALZAAN SOLDIERS AND LOOKING FOR THE "BOOK OF KEYS"...
"THAT THING"?
OHH...

NOT GONNA FIGHT ME ANYMORE?
I THOUGHT THERE WAS AN UNBREAKABLE RULE WHERE YOU HAD TO SILENCE SOMEONE WHO KNEW YOUR TRUE IDENTITY?
SOUNA'S A GOOD GUY
I DON'T WANNA MAKE AN ENEMY OUT OF HIM
YOU'RE PRETTY FREAKY, Y'KNOW..
IF YOU'D GONE ALL OUT...

IT'S SAID THAT THERE'S A WARRIOR WHO'S ROAMED THE EARTH FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS IN SEARCH OF THE "BOOK OF KEYS"...
HEY, HAVE YOU HEARD OF THIS LEGEND?
SORRY, BUT I HAVEN'T HEARD ABOUT ANY LEGENDS OR ANYTHING
THEY ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON, AND THAT IS THAT THE WARRIOR CARRIES A MASSIVE SWORD ON THEIR BACK...
THERE ARE MANY VERSIONS OF THIS LEGEND BUT NO MATTER WHETHER IT'S A MAN OR WOMAN

SIGH
SOUMA JUST
WHERE'VE
YOU GONE
OFF TO?


PHEW...
MAN, THAT
WAS
SCARY

THE LINK TO
THE "BOOK
OF KEYS"
THAT I'VE
BEEN
SEARCHING
FOR?
COULD IT BE
THERE?

YOU MUST BE REALLY HUNGRY
WOULD YOU LIKE SEC-ONDS?
THANKS!

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ハグ

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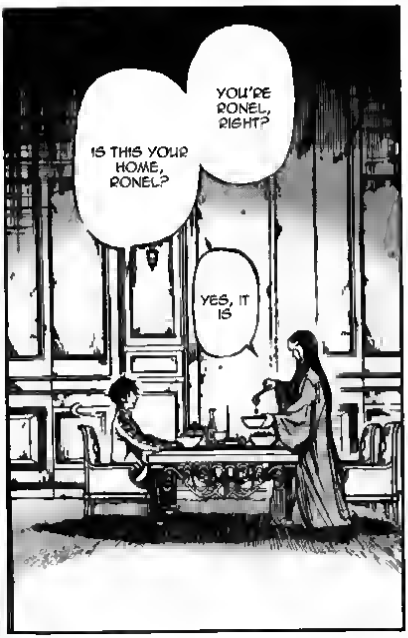
COULD I ASK...
WHY I'M IN HERE RIGHT NOW...?


YOU'RE RONEL, RIGHT?
IS THIS YOUR HOME, RONEL?
YES, IT IS

FATHER BROUGHT YOU HERE LAST NIGHT
YOUR FATHER?

PONEL..?
THE PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL, HELMUT BLAIR...
IS MY FATHER...
ALSO, COULD I ASK THE MOMENT I WOKE UP I HEARD SOMEONE YELL "SAVE ME", WAS THAT...
OH NO...
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
RING
FATHER IS CALLING ME...

PLEASE FORGET EVERYTHING I JUST SAID!
DO NOT LEAVE THIS ROOM!
WAIT...
LORD FATHER...
STEP
STEP
STEP

RONEL...! WHY SO SLOW...!

LORD FATHER...

YOU STILL HAVEN'T ASKED HIM, RONEL?!
LORD FATHER, PLEASE FORGIVE ME-!

YOU USE-LESS PIECE OF TRASH!
バン
バン
HE IS JUST A CHILD
AH...!

RONEL!
RONEL!
YOU WOULD DISOBEY EVEN YOUR OWN FATHER?!
FATHER! PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
ドガ
ドガ
ドガ
I DON'T NEED YOU! I WILL ASK HIM MYSELF!
NO! FATHER...!

……
ガチャ
!
GREEAAAAAAK
AHH...!

TO BE CONTINUED

TRANSLATION BY:
VISCOUNTRANSLATIONS

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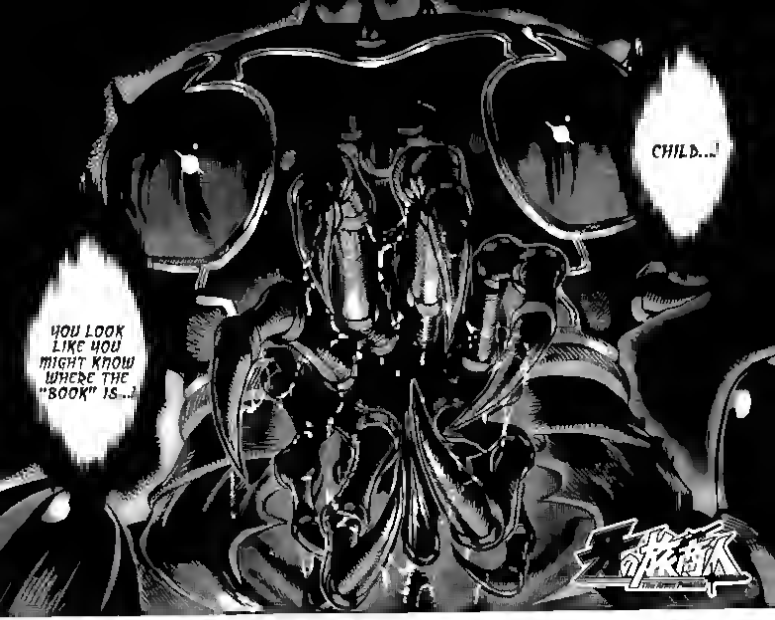

CHILD...!
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU MIGHT KNOW WHERE THE "BOOK" IS...!

THAT PENETRATING STENCH OF BLOOD IN THE STREETS FROM LAST NIGHT

IT WAS AS IF I COULD SMELL IT AGAIN...
WHERE IS THE "BOOK"...?

WAAA-
RGH!
YOU CANNOT RUN...!

DON'T COME NEAR ME, YOU MON-STER...!
武の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

UGH...?!
YOU...

バタッ
ギィィ
THAT SWORD ...
ドス
ドス
ドス
ガッ
ガッ
YOU MUST MAKE THAT BRAT TALK NO MATTER WHAT..!
ズン
ズン
I LEAVE HIM TO YOU, ROMEL..!

MISS RONGLI
HAAH
HAAH
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOUR FATHER WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL?
WHAT EXACTLY IS GOING ON HERE?

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
WHEN YOU ASKED FOR MY HELP, WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT THIS...?

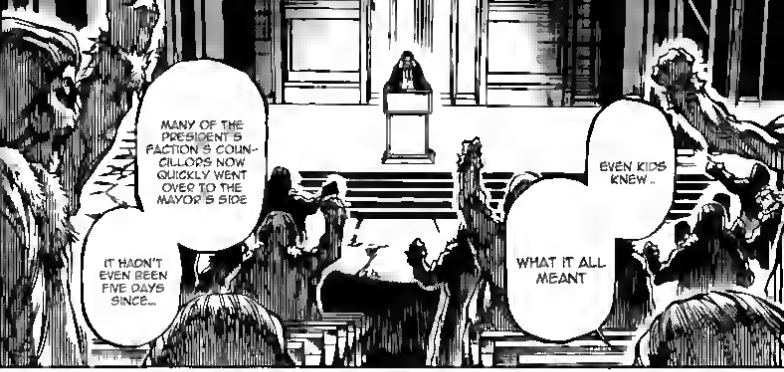
THE "BOOK" THAT TURNED HIM INTO A MONSTER
FATHER.. IS LOOKING FOR...

I'LL TELL YOU... EVERYTHING
IN ORDER TO CREATE MORE MONSTERS
SO THAT MORE BALZAANS CAN BE KILLED!

THE ONES BEHIND THE RALZAAN SOLDIER MURDERS?
I RECKON THEY MIGHT'VE BEEN SOME THUGS THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT SENT OVER..
NOW THEN, OLD MAN DARPY.. COULD YOU ELABORATE A LITTLE ON WHAT YOU JUST SAID
DRINK UP THEN, DON'T MIND ME!
PWAAAH! NOTHING LIKE SOME GOOD HIGH-QUALITY WHISKEY!

IN EARLY SPRING THIS YEAR, BALZAAL SENT AN EMISSARY...
SAYING THEY WANTED TO SET UP A BASE HERE FOR THEIR MARCH NORTHWARDS
WE ALL KNOW THAT HEMOEN WAS CREATED BY THE GATHERING OF MERCHANTS IN THIS AREA
KALADIA HAS CLAIMED IT AS AN AUTONOMOUS CITY UNDER ITS RULE, BUT IT'S NOT ACTUALLY PART OF KALADIAN TERRITORY
THE CITY COUNCIL WAS SPLIT INTO TWO FACTIONS OVER THIS REQUEST...
THE MAYOR'S FACTION, WHO WANTED TO ALLOW THE BALZAAN MILITARY TO STATION TROOPS HERE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN OUR AUTONOMY,
AND THE PRESIDENT'S FACTION, WHO WANTED TO KEEP THE PEACE WITH KALADIA AND THUS REFUSE THE STATIONING OF TROOPS HERE
THE PRESIDENT'S SIDE, OF COURSE
A LOT OF THE MERCHANTS HERE HAVE ACTUALLY COME TO TRADE IN KALADIA
WHICH SIDE HAD THE ADVANTAGE?

FINE.
HMM... THEN HOW DID THIS PLACE BECOME A BALZAAN BASE IN THE END?
IT'S BECAUSE THE COUNCILLORS IN THE PRESIDENT'S FACTION OFTEN BECAME THE VICTIMS OF MURDERS...
THEY DIED HORRIBLE DEATHS, TOO
ONE OF THEM WAS GAGGED HAD HIS GENITALS CUT OFF, AND WAS LEFT TO DIE IN THE WEST
ANOTHER ONE WAS FOUND DEAD IN THE MORNING, BEHEADED ALONG WITH HIS WIFE
NOW THAT'S JUST...


MANY OF THE PRESIDENT'S FACTION'S COUNCILLORS NOW QUICKLY WENT OVER TO THE MAYOR'S SIDE
IT HADN'T EVEN BEEN FIVE DAYS SINCE...
EVEN KIDS KNEW..
WHAT IT ALL MEANT

FATHER.. WAS FURIOUS...

BUT WORST OF ALL WAS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT HIMSELF HELMUT BLAIR

AND HE USED HIS AUTHORITY AS PRESIDENT TO OVERTURN THE DECISION
FATHER RECKONED THE CITY COUNCIL HAD LOST ITS SENSE OF JUSTICE

THE COUNCILLORS WERE PANICKED
THEY KNEW THE LONGER THEY STALLED THE HIGHER THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR BEING TARGETED...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORCE YOURSELF TO SPEAK, MISS RONEL...
IT DOESN'T MATTER PLEASE LET ME FINISH.!

THAT NIGHT, THEY CAME...

КЯКСКЯ
...
ИЦИЦ-
ИЦ...

LORD FATHER ...!!

LORD FATHER...!
LORD FATHER...!
NO ONE CAME TO SAVE US...
HEMDEM'S SECURITY FORCES CHANGED THEIR PATROL COURSE FOR THAT NIGHT AND DIDN'T COME BY OUR HOME...
I WILL NEVER FORGET...

THE MAN WHO LEFT HIS MARK BRANDED ON MY BODY...!

THE MAN WHO RUINED OUR LIVES...

THAT MARK...!

THERE AP-
PEARED IN
FRONT OF US...
AND AFTER HE
LEFT
CRRRRRRAAAAK
THE MAN WHO
CARRIED THE
"BOOK"...

THE ARMS PEDDLER 47
TO BE CONTINUED

Writer
七月鏡一
Kyoichi Nanatsuki

Artist
梟
Night Owl

兵の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

VISTRANS.NET

RAWS (PUBLIC):
10TH MYSTERY

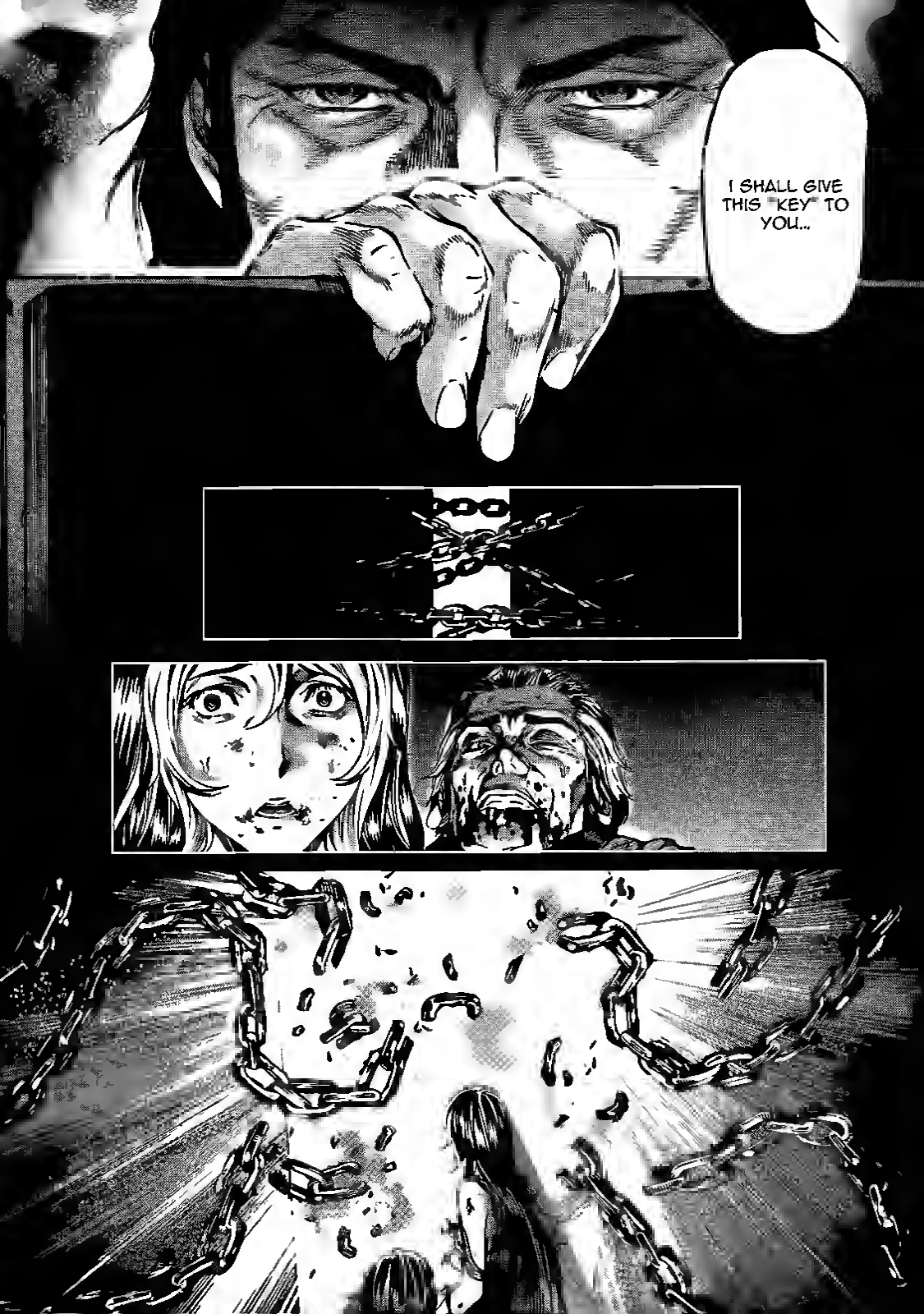
TRANSLATION + EDITING:
VISCOUN

THE MAYOR AND HIS DAMNED LACKEYS...
DAMMIT... JUST LIKE THAT, HEMDEN...
LORD FATHER...!
COUGH
LORD FATHER...!
I WILL PERSONALLY...
UNFORGIVABLE... ABSOLUTELY UNFORGIVABLE...
BUT MY LIFE IS ALMOST AT AN END...
OH... HOW I REGRET...

BUT IS THIS REALLY THE "END"?
STEP
STEP
ALL THAT SEPARATES THEM IS A "DOOR"...
THE "BEGINNING" AND THE "END" HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ADJACENT TO EACH OTHER
WHO ARE YOU...?
スッ
EVERYONE HAS THAT "DOOR" WITHIN THEM, AND EVERYONE CAN OPEN THEM

ALL YOU NEED IS THE "KEY"...!
武の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

WHEN DID HE COME IN?
A STRANGER, A "MAN IN BLACK"...
A "KEY...?
IF YOU REALLY WANT IT...
YES...
IF YOU WANT YOUR WISHES TO COME TRUE...
ｶﾁｬｯ


I SHALL GIVE THIS "KEY" TO YOU...

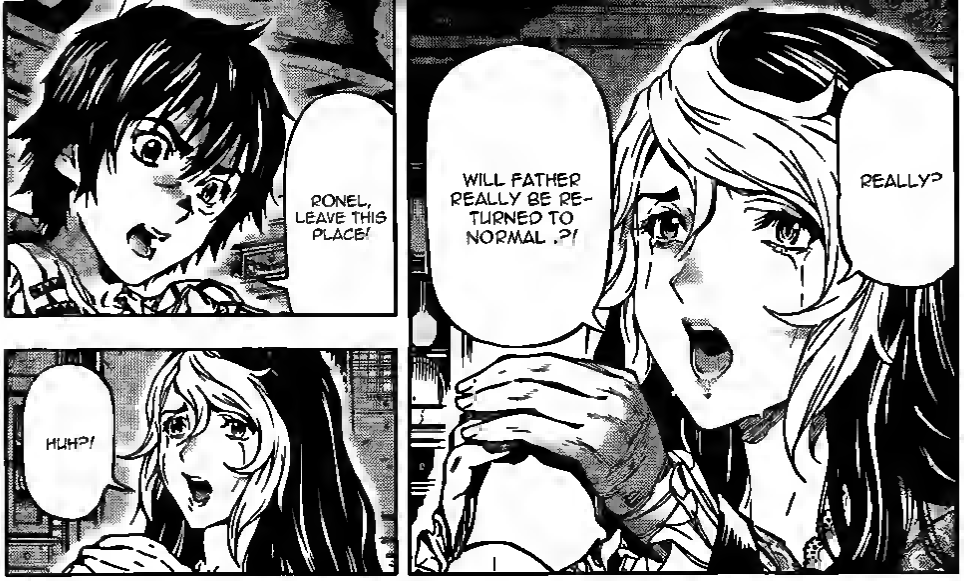
THE "BOOK OF KEYS"... THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD THAT NAME...
EVER SINCE HE READ THE "BOOK OF KEYS", FATHER HASN'T BEEN THE SAME...
YOUR FATHER READ THE "BOOK OF KEYS"...!
HUH...?

RONEL... DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED...
THE MAYOR'S LACKEYS, THE ONES WHO CAUSED YOU AND I SO MUCH SUFFERING...
THESE ARE THE ONES THAT BETRAYED HEMDEN...
BALZAAL IS NOTHING IN THE FACE OF THIS POWER!
SEE, ! THE POWER JUST KEEPS SURGING...!

RONEL! BRING ME THE BOOK!
I MUST INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO SHARE THIS POWER WITH
IT'S... IT'S GONE...!
WHAT?!
THAT "BOOK" ISN'T HERE ANYMORE!
IT'S BEEN STOLEN, LORD FATHER...!
WAS IT THEM? WAS IT THE BALZAANS WHO CAME TO OUR PLACE?
THEY WOULD STEAL ANYTHING!

UWOHHH! I WANT IT BACK!
THE BOOK IS MINE!
IN THE HOPES OF FINDING THAT "BOOK"...
EVER SINCE THAT DAY, FATHER HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY ATTACKING BALZAAN SOLDIERS...
I WAS SO SCARED, I HID THE BOOK...
HAS THE "BOOK" REALLY BEEN...?

IT WOULDN'T BURN AT ALL, EITHER!
THE "BOOK" COULDN'T BE CUT NO MATTER HOW I TRIED!
I DO...!
THERE IS A WAY OF BURNING THAT "BOOK"!
IT WILL CLOSE ANY "DOORS" THAT HAVE BEEN OPENED!
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE "BOOK"... DO YOU KNOW ANY WAY OF BRINGING FATHER BACK TO NORMAL...?


RONEL, LEAVE THIS PLACE!
HUH?!
WILL FATHER REALLY BE RETURNED TO NORMAL .?!
REALLY?

RUN WITH ME! AND WE'LL DESTROY THAT "BOOK"!
IF YOU CONTINUE TO STAY HERE, YOUR FATHER WILL BEAT YOU AGAIN..!

THIS REALLY SUCKS. WE'RE ON HIGH ALERT AGAIN TONIGHT?
EVEN THE FRONT LINES SEEM SAFER THAN THIS PLACE...
THE GENERALS HAVEN'T BEEN VERY HAPPY-
SERIOUSLY, THEY EVEN MADE US BRING THIS THING ALONG...
LOOK THERE... QUITE A FEW MORE HAVE COME

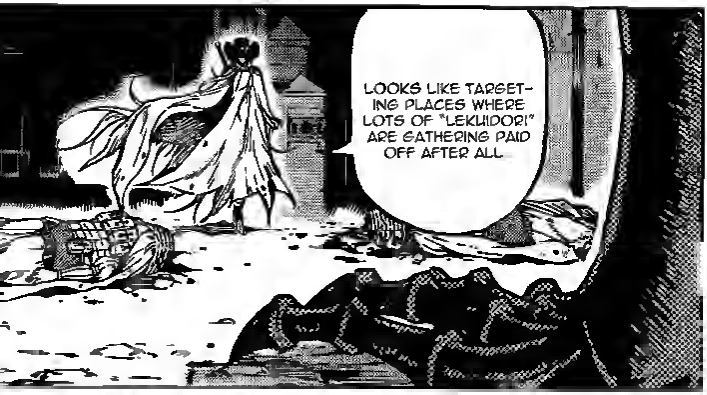
THOSE "LEKUI-DORI" SURE ARE CREEPY LITTLE THINGS...
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR US TO TURN INTO CORPSES
NAH, NO POINT WASTING BULLETS...
DAMMIT! WANT ME TO KILL 'EM?

EH?
GAAH
!!

WHERE IS... THE "BOOK"...?

SLURP ...
SLURP ...
DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE "BOOK" IS?
YOU ARE ALL SACRI-FICES...!
THEN... JUST DIE...

HAH, ISN'T THIS GREAT...


LOOKS LIKE TARGETING PLACES WHERE LOTS OF "LEKUIDORI" ARE GATHERING PAID OFF AFTER ALL.

YOU KNOW ABOUT THE "BOOK"...?!

I'M CURIOUS, IS THIS REALLY HOW YOU PLAN ON ASKING FOR THE "BOOK"'S LOCATION?

OF COURSE!
I'VE COME TO BURN IT UNTIL NOT EVEN A SINGLE PAGE IS LEFT BEHIND!
THE ARMS PEDDLER 48
TO BE CONTINUED
TRANSLATION AND TYPESETTING
VISCOUNTRANSLATIONS

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YOU WANT TO BURN THE "BOOK"...?
女の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

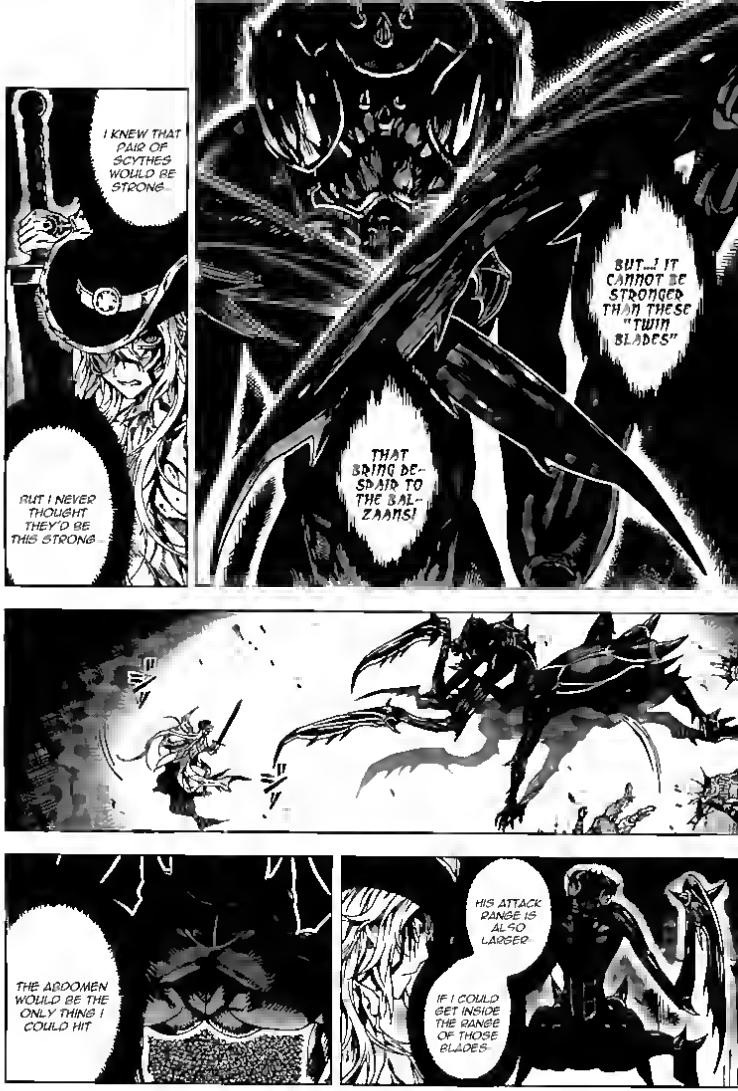
YOU STILL DON'T GET IT?
YOUR INSTINCTS SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU BY NOW...

JUST WHO... ARE YOU...?

I AM YOUR "ENEMY"!
武の旅商人
The Arms Peddler

I SEE!
I SEE IT NOW!
YOU ARE DANGER-OUS!

I CAN FEEL...
A STRANGE "POWER" COMING FROM THAT SWORD...


I KNEW THAT PAIR OF SCYTHES WOULD BE STRONG...
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D BE THIS STRONG...
THAT BRING BE-SDAID TO THE BAL-ZAANS!
BUT...! IT CANNOT BE STRONGER THAN THESE "TWIN BLADES"
THE ABDOMEN WOULD BE THE ONLY THING I COULD HIT
IF I COULD GET INSIDE THE RANGE OF THOSE BLADES
HIS ATTACK RANGE IS ALSO LARGER

DAMMIT... WHY NOW OF ALL TIMES...
ズズズ

UGH...!

YOU ARE MINE!

MMPH...
IT'S OVER!
OL' CREEP!

I ASKED THAT WOMAN OUT FIRST!

SCREEEECH
НУДН!

UWOHH HHH!!
SKR EEE EYA AA!!

SHR
IEK
DAMMIT... NOT DEEP ENOUGH!
.....
HEY! GARAMI!

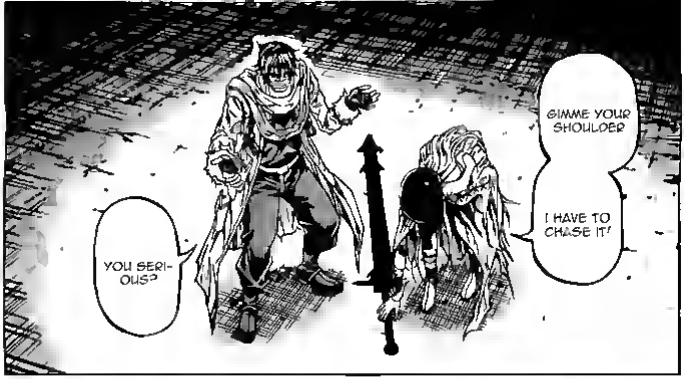
IT S JUST A CASE OF BAD TIMING...
IT HAPPENED JUST WHEN I PULLED OUT MY SWORD

IT S YOU, REID

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU BEFORE! DON T OVEREXERT YOURSELF!

HUH? IT S LYING OVER THERE
WHERE S THE SWORD?

HELP ME SHEATHE IT
IF I HADN'T COME HERE YOU WOULD'VE BEEN DONE FOR, Y KNOW?
WITH THE STATE YOU'RE IN NOW YOU SHOULDN'T BE PULLING THIS SWORD OUT!
WOAH!


GIMME YOUR SHOULDER
I HAVE TO CHASE IT!
YOU SERI-OUS?

HOW MANY MORE TIMES D'YOU THINK YOU CAN UN-SHEATHE THAT SWORD?

DON'T GIVE ME THAT—
I WON'T LET THAT SWORD BURN ME OUT SO EASILY!

FIVE MORE TIMES? SIX MORE?

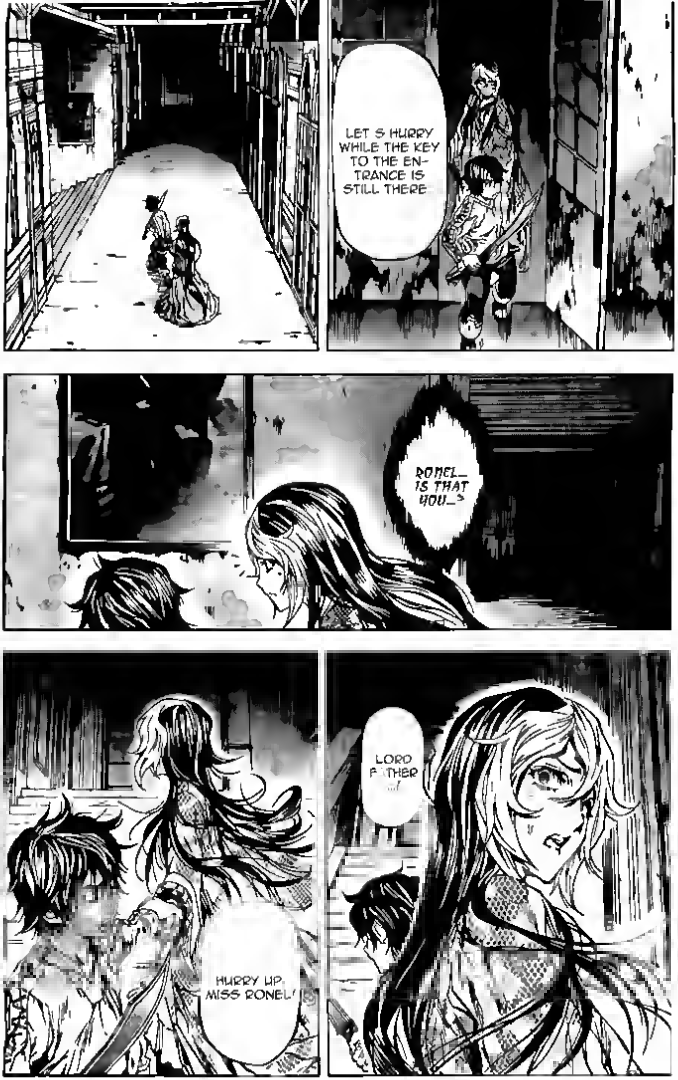
SECURE THE PERIMETER!
FOUND THE MONSTER!

WE D BETTER GET OUTTA HERE FAST... AND PLUS
THE BALZAAN TROOPS ARE GONNA ASSEMBLE HERE PRETTY SOON

THAT THING'S HEADED TOWARDS WHERE SOUNA'S HIDING !

MISS RONEL...
MM...
HOW ABOUT YOUR DAD?
NOW'S THE ONLY CHANCE WE'LL GET TO LEAVE...
HE'S BEEN BURNED HORRIBLY. HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN GREAT PAIN.
HE JUST CAME BACK BUT HE LOCKED HIMSELF INTO HIS ROOM STRAIGHT AWAY...
UGH
UGH

I DON'T THINK I CAN LEAVE MY FATHER ALONE HERE, AFTER ALL.
"BURNED"?
MISS RONEL! DON'T YOU WANT TO RETURN YOUR FATHER TO HIS FORMER SELF?!
DO YOU WANT TO LET HIM CARRY ON KILLING PEOPLE?!
.....
OUR ONLY OPTION NOW IS TO HAVE THE "BOOK OF KEYS" BURNED


LET'S HURRY WHILE THE KEY TO THE ENTRANCE IS STILL THERE
RONEL... IS THAT YOU...?
LORD FATHER...!
HURRY UP, MISS RONEL!

RONEL, DON'T GO!
STAY BY ME, OR ELSE...!
I'M SORRY, LORD FATHER!
HURRY! LET'S GET THE "BOOK OF KEYS" TO GARAMI!
THE ARMS PEDDLER 49
TO BE CONTINUED
TRANSLATION BY
VISCOUNTRANSLATIONS

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「あとがき――悪夢は開いた扉から――」

七月鏡一

思い出話を一つ。

子供の頃、私は庭先で小さなカマキリを捕まえた。

私の指ほどしかないチビだったが、差し出した私の指先に向かって2本の鎌を振り上げて威嚇してくる勇猛さの持ち主だった。

カマキリは2匹いて、私はそれをうまいことつまみ上げて一緒の虫カゴに入れ、そしてエサになる他の虫を捕まえに行った。

1時間ほどして収穫を手に帰った私が見たものは、2匹いたカマキリのうちの1匹が、もう1匹を食いランチにしている光景だった。

カマキリの繊維は交尾した後、メスがオスを食べてしまうという逸話を聞いたことはあったが、いざその共食いを実際に目撃したのは、子供にはなかなか衝撃的な出来事だった。実際にはカマキリは交尾した雄雌に限らず、目の前の動くものは何でも捕食することは後に知った。

もう一つ思い出話。

私の幼い頃の落書帳を今になってめくってみると、特撮映画の怪獣たちが多数描かれている。東京タワーに綱を作るモスラ。糸を吐きかけるクモンガ。鎌を振り上げるカマキラス。そして、トゲだらけのハサミのような前肢を持つメガヌロンがそこにいる。

古代トンボの幼虫（ヤゴ）であるメガヌロンは、登場する映画「空の大怪獣ラドン」の中では主役のラドンの事なるエサに過ぎないのだが、幼い私にとって最も恐ろしい怪獣だった。

ゴジラやラドンが暴れても街が大規模に破壊されるという、幼い私には実感のないスケールのものだったが、メガヌロンは違う。

ほんの8メートルの体長しかないメガヌロンは、開け放たれた縁側から民家の居間に這い上がってくるのだ。人間を捕食するために――

幼い私はTVで「空の大怪獣ラドン」を見た日の夜に、自宅にこの古代昆虫が侵入してくる悪夢にうなされた。

こうした幼少期の思い出は、長じた私にいくつかの作品を生ませた。

一つは「BUGS 捕食者たちの夏」（作画：藤原芳秀）という、巨大化したオオカマキリが陸上自衛隊特殊作戦群を相手に大暴れするという、巨大昆虫パニック物だ。

現在、その続編である「BUGSLAND 箱船のトリトン」という作品を小学館携食サイト「モバMAN」でスタートさせたばかりだ。興味ある方は是非覗かれたい。

どさくさの他社作品のステマはさておき、

そしてもう一つが本作「牙の旅籠人」であり、まさしくこの第6巻に登場する怪物がそれなのだ。

本巻の怪物は、完成した漫画には一切出て来ないが、原作原稿のト書きでは「魔虫」と表記していた。

モチーフはカマキリだが、実際の昆虫とは異なり、人の意識に刻まれた怪物的イメージを増幅して生み出されたまさしく「魔虫」だ。

「魔虫」は子供の頃に見た私の悪夢からやって来た。

開いた扉の向こうから室内に体を突っ込んできて、壁際に追い詰めた私にトゲだらけの巨大な前肢を伸ばしてくるあの日の悪夢から――

まったく悪夢ほど素晴らしいものはない！

2012年10月28日
BAR「蘆の巣」カウンターにて
http://nanatsuki.blog.so-net.ne.jp/
https://twitter.com/JULY_MIRROR

Extra Contents

カバー用イラスト

※コミックス発売時のカバー用イラストを収録

Extra Contents おわり

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牙の旅商人
6

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